

July 21, 2010

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: I am very pleased to join my colleagues in support of the legislation today, which includes the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010.

Others have spoken about the epidemic of crime in our Nation's Indian lands, but unfortunately the tribes have reported that many of the crimes, including the very serious crimes such as rape and assault, are not included among those prosecuted in Federal courts by U.S. Attorneys either as a matter of case priorities or limited resources.

With inadequate funding and limited prosecutorial authority of the tribes, even when the crimes are prosecuted in tribal court, the limitation of 12 months on sentences in tribal court does not allow sentences to address the more serious crimes. This bill allows tribal authorities to respond to such crimes and to do so with more appropriate consequences for the more serious and dangerous offenders.

At the same time, it improves the procedures in tribal courts and better protects the rights of tribal defendants. Moreover, as it authorizes more robust enforcement and more appropriate sentences, it also authorizes key programs to address the root causes of crime. These include juvenile delinquency prevention and summer youth programs, as well as drug and alcohol abuse programs.

Finally, while empowering tribes to better police themselves, the bill also addresses Federal law enforcement to do more and improves the coordination among tribal, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies. This is a practical effort to solve a very significant problem in our country.

Mr. Speaker, this is a rare crime bill that comes to the floor of this body with the kind of broad, bipartisan support that the Tribal Law and Order Act has earned. This bill has the unanimous support of the Senate. It has the support of tribal governments and organizations. It has the support from the Justice Department and outside law enforcement groups such as the National District Attorneys Association. We also have the support of Amnesty International.

With that kind of bipartisan support, I urge all of the Members to vote ``yes" on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the Senate amendment.